# WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
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## BUTTON WORKERS STILL FIGHTING

### Magnificent Battle for Living Wage and Right to Organize Still Raging in Iowa.

Muscatine, Ia., Dec. 16.—This City has been in the throes of a lockout, and later a strike involving the Pearl Button factories for nearly a year. Notwithstanding that at one time it was thought a settlement had been reached, the owners of the factories violated their part of the agreement, and, as a consequence, the employes rebelled. The button manufacturers are united in a close association and have been ever since the button workers were locked out last spring, when they attempted to form a union. The number of men and women now involved in the strike is approximately 1,500. The newspapers of this City have refrained from printing the actual conditions and no other news agency has taken occasion to look into the situation as it really exists, save one. A few days ago one of the news gathering associations sent Neal Jones to this City, and, as a result, five illustrated articles are to appear in a large number of papers distributed throughout the country. In the first article, which has just appeared, the writer says: "Two thousand people, mostly button cutters and their families, have left the town. Fifty small merchants are pinched for money. Men and women are going underfed and pale-faced children are shivering from lack of proper clothing. And all on account of nine bullheaded button manufacturers. These nine manufacturers have turned the little corn belt city upside down, and for many months have held Muscatine in a state of civil war. Many of the people carry guns. Everybody here knows it is a downright shame, and now, at the eleventh hour, figuratively, they are awakening to the fact that the manufacturers themselves are almost entirely to blame. These manufacturers say that there is no way to settle the trouble, but there is always a way, just as in the Des Moines Railway strike, and the people of Muscatine who have previously backed the manufacturers, are beginning to realize that the manufacturers are goldbricking them. The manufacturers have bluffed their way through, inspiring the police, sheriff, and hired Chicago thugs to bust the heads of tottering old men. They have offered no remonstance to the jailing of women and girls, deluded through some strange process of reasoning into believing that brutality will bring the strikers to time. It is amazing to note that even here and there can be found otherwise reputable citizens of Muscatine, who believe that this sort of anarchy is the way to settle a labor dispute. Yet good citizens are found encouraging lawlessness, and even the dignified Commercial Club has passed

resolutions heaping embers on the flames. Men who stand high commercially, professionally, and socially have so far forgotten themselves as to encourage, in the name of the law, crimes that ordinarily send men to the penitentiary. A crime is a crime, whether it is committed by a button manufacturer, a patrolman, a police judge or a sheriff, and the sooner Muscatine realizes that they are hypnotized into condoning worse acts than any they are able to lay at the door of labor, the sooner it will regain its feet. They have only to ask themselves just how much more consideration should be extended a button manufacturer than the average business man, and the strike will end."

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## THE GREAT RAILROAD STRIKE

Washington, Dec. 16.—From every quarter comes favorable reports of the great strike on the Harriman lines and Illinois Central. While it is impossible to give in detail the exact situation, yet, from all information at hand, the position which the strikers hold is exceedingly good. J. W. Kline, President of the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers, in nominal charge of the strike, says: "The strike on the Harriman lines and Illinois Central goes on; the prospects look much brighter for the men every day. Dead engines and bad order cars fill the sidings and clog the yards. There is no doubt about our final victory."

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## TO AMEND SHERMAN LAW

Washington, Dec. 16.—Congressman Henry of Texas has introduced H. R. 14063, amending the Sherman anti-trust law. The bill seeks to amend the present law to correct its defects, and also to exclude certain organizations. Section 10 of the bill provides "That nothing in said act is intended, nor shall any provision thereof hereafter be enforced, so as to apply to members of organizations or associations not for profit and without capital, or to agricultural products or live stock in the hands of the producer or raisers."

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## CONGRESS RECONVENES

Long Session of National Legislature Opens—Labor Bills to Receive Consideration at Once.

Washington, Dec. 16.—The Congress of the United States convened in regular session on Monday, Dec. 4. The bills in which labor is interested were all introduced during the extra session, and referred to appropriate committees. The eight-hour bill is on the calendar, having been favorably reported by the Labor Committee. In the closing hours of the extra session a resolution was passed authorizing an investigation of the Taylor and kindred efficiency systems, and in accordance therewith meetings have been held at Watertown, Boston and New York and partial investigations made. A hearing before the judiciary committee of the House on the Clayton contempt of court bill was held on Dec. 7.

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The Garment Workers of Galesburg, Ill. have received an increase in pay of 20 per cent. The organization only having been established about a month ago.

## BUILDING TRADES DEPARTMENT

Convention Held at Atlanta, Ga., Takes Definite Action on Numerous Matters and Adopts A. F. of L. Recommendations.

Washington, Dec. 16.—The convention of the Building Trades Department, A. F. of L., was held immediately subsequent to the adjournment of the American Federation of Labor Convention. The report of the Secretary-Treasurer showed that the average membership for 1911 was 294,345. The receipts for 1911 were $18,492.49, with expenditures of $19,086.09—leaving a balance in the treasury of $3,235.96, there having been a surplus last year of approximately $3,800. There are 20 organizations in full affiliation. During the year 13 local council charters were granted and two were re-issued, with 11 charters suspended. The American Federation of Labor Convention took definite steps to amalgamate the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and in this action the Building Trades Department concurred, rescinding its former action and inviting the United Brotherhood of Carpenters to again become affiliated. In the matter of the Steamfitters, the action of the American Federation of Labor Convention was also concurred in. The Committee on President's report in the matter of dual organizations adopted the report of the Committee wherein it was recommended that "members of dual organizations be treated as non-union men, and that local councils be instructed to take proper action in the premises consistent with trades union principles, wherever possible." The Department Convention also closely followed the recommendation of the Adjustment Committee in the A. F. of L. Convention when it declared "one craft one organization." However, the Building Trades Department, in order to more clearly specify what was meant, changed the declaration to read, "one trade, one organization." The Adjustment Committee in its final report, introduced a resolution, the import of which is to eliminate strikes occurring on construction work over jurisdictional questions. It provides a plan of arbitration to settle these differences without cessation of work. The Committee's report was adopted with only minor changes. The election of officers resulted as follows: James Short, Journeymen Stone Cutters, President; George F. Hedrick, Brotherhood of Painters, 1st Vice-President; Frank M. Ryan, Structural Iron Workers, 2nd Vice-President; O. A. Tveitmoe, Cement Workers, 3rd Vice-President; M. O'Sullivan, Sheet Metal Workers, 4th Vice-President; Frank J. McNulty, Electrical Workers, 5th Vice-President; William J. Spencer, Plumbers, Secretary-Treasurer. The next convention will be held next year in Rochester, N. Y., just subsequent to the annual convention of the A. F. of L.

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## OYSTER CAPTAINS ARRESTED

Washington, Dec. 16.—A local Collector of Customs has, within the last few days, arrested twenty-five captains of oyster dredging boats in the Chesapeake Bay for violating the navigation laws and mistreating their crews. Those who were placed under arrest were held under $1,000.00 bail for trial before the United States District Court in Baltimore, the greater portion of those arrested not being able to furnish bail. The charge against these captains was with-holding sufficient food from their crews and not maintaining proper accommodations for them on board the vessels.

## CIGARMAKERS VICTORIOUS

Louisville, Ky., Dec. 16.--After a controversy extending over a period of three years a settlement has been reached with the firm of J. A. Lancaster & Co., cigar manufacturers, and the local union of cigarmakers. At the beginning of the contest the firm, after having built up a large business through the use of the Cigarmakers' label, announced its intention of conducting a non-union establishment. The result attained is exceedingly gratifying to the local union of cigarmakers, as well as the movement in general.

## MEMBERSHIP STILL CLIMBING

Washington, Dec. 16.--Notwithstanding the fact that Frank Morrison Secretary of the American Federation of Labor, reported to the Atlanta convention the highest paid up membership ever attained, the months of October and November, the first two months of the new fiscal year, reveals a still further increase in paid up membership, eclipsing the high water mark by a substantial margin. Secretary Morrison asserts that a vigorous organizing campaign will be prosecuted during the coming year.

## TO PROTECT RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS

Washington, Dec. 16.--Railroad construction engineers and structural experts from nearly every large railroad system in the country have held a conference with the postmaster general to outline to him the progress made in standardizing railroad mail cars. Under the act of congress which became effective July 1, last every mail car used in the United States must have at least an all-steel frame, and all cars to be built in the future must be conctructed entirely of steel. This result was brought about by the insistent demands of the organized railway mail clerks, materially assisted by the American Federation of Labor.

## CANTRELL BILL PASSED

Washington, Dec. 16.--The Cantrell bill, authorizing an annual census of the supply of tobacco manufactures in the United States, has passed the house. The measure is designed to benefit the growers, who claim that under present conditions manufacturers are at all times familiar with conditions in the field, whereas there is no corresponding knowledge available for the planter as to the exact supplies of manufactures on hand, thus giving an opportunity to the manufacturers to juggle prices to the disadvantage of the growers. Congressman Cantrell is a member of the Farmers' union.

## SHORTAGE OF MAIL CARRIERS

Washington, Dec. 16.--The Washington postoffice is facing a probable shortage in substitute mail carriers for the holiday rush. The city is being scoured in search of eligibles whose names are on the list furnished by the civil service commission. Extremely few have signified their intention of accepting positions for a short period, as the remuneration is only 30 cents an hour.

## FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING

American Association for Labor Legislation Will Hold Three-Day Session in Nation's Capital.

Washington, Dec. 16.--The American Association for Labor Legislation will convene in annual session at the New Raleigh hotel, Washington, D. C., on Thursday, Dec. 28, and continue in session for three days. The subjects to be discussed may be classified under three general heads, "The Relation of State to Federal Workmen's Compensation and Insurance Legislation," "The Unemployment Problem in America" and "Safety and Health in the Mining Industry." Aside from a number of professors, attorneys and other eminent men interested in advancing labor legislation to conserve the human resources of the nation, President Gompers, John Mitchell, Thomas J. Duffy of the Operative Potters, Capt. Cole of the Longshoremen and other labor men are on the program to deliver addresses.

## OPENS FIGHT AGAIN

Washington, Dec. 16.--The postoffice department, through O. P. Granfield, first assistant postmaster general, has opened up a war against the National Federation of Postoffice Clerks, affiliated with the A. F. of L. Recently an order was sent to the Chicago office notifying all clerks in that office to cease membership in the union. The order is not couched in clear terms, but its meaning is understood. It is understood that there are some 900 members of the organization employed by the Chicago office. The department seems determined to continue its war on all organizations other than the mutual admirations societies, which meet and adopt resolutions commendatory of the splendid personal appearance and exceptional ability of departmental officials.

## CHILDREN'S BUREAU

Washington, Dec. 16.--Senate bill No. 252, known as the Children's Bureau bill, has been favorably reported to the Senate, and was called up on the morning of Dec. 11 for consideration. Senator Heyburn, of Idaho, who is always out of harmony with any humanitarian legislation, interposed his usual objections. The bill proposes to establish in the department of Commerce and Labor a bureau to be known as the children's bureau, to be under the direction of a chief to be appointed by the president, and who shall receive a salary of $5,000 per annum. The bureau is to investigate and report upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life, especially the questions of infant mortality, the birth rate, orphanage, juvenile courts, desertion, dangerous occupations, accidents and diseases of children, employment, legislation affecting children in the several states and territories, and such other facts as have a bearing upon the welfare of children.

## SPRINGFIELD PRINTERS GET RAISE

Springfield, Mass. Dec. 16.--The local Typographical Union in this city has just executed a new agreement with the newspapers in this city for the term of three years. The new schedule calls for an advance of $1.00 for addmen, make-ups and proof readers, with corresponding increase for night work, with 45 hours constituting a week.

## BRITISH COMPENSATION ACT DATA

### Government Issues Blue Book Containing Statistical and Other Valuable Information.

London, Dec. 16.--The government has just issued a blue book giving the statistics of compensation and of proceedings under the workmen's compensation act of 1906 and the employers' liability act of 1880, during the year 1910. The returns have been gathered from the seven great groups of industries--mines, quarries, railways, factories, harbors and docks, constructional works and shipping. These industries in 1910, according to the blue book, embraced 134,820 employers and more than 7,000,000 employes who came within the provisions of the workmen's compensation act of 1906. Compensation was paid in these industries in 1910 in 3,510 cases of death and 378,340 cases of disablement. The average payment when death resulted was $744, and in cases of disablement, $27. Taking the industries enumerated together, the annual charge for compensation averaged $1.86 for each person employed. It was lowest ($1.03 for each person) for persons working in factories and highest for those employed in mines ($4.90 for each person) and in docks ($4.98 for the individual). In the coal mining industry the annual charge for compensation worked out at about 18 cents per ton of coal raised. The compensation paid in the industries enumerated in 1910 aggregated $13,141,131, as compared with $11,067,579 in the preceding year. When the cost of management and other expenses are included the total charge or expense cast upon the seven industries enumerated in the report aggregated, it is estimated, about $19,466,000. In these figures are included, in addition to accidents, cases of the various industrial diseases, now 24 in number, included under the workmen's compensation act. Compensation was paid in 1910 in 36 cases of death from disease and in 4,438 cases of disablement. Of the cases originating in industrial diseases, 85.2 occurred in the mining industry, and were due principally to nystagmus, beat hand, beat knee and beat elbow. Of the remaining cases 519 were attributable to lead poisoning. So general now are the claims made under the workmen's compensation act of 1906 that in 1910 there were only 217 cases which the courts were called to pass upon under the employers' liability act of 1880.

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## SEAMEN'S WAGES IN ANTIPODES

Sydney, Australia, Dec. 16.—The average monthly rates of wages paid to seamen engaged on sailing vessels at this port are: To Great Britain and other European countries, $19.44 to $21.82; west coast of America, $19 to $22; island trade and return, $24 to $30; interstate trade, $22 to $25 (Steamships, $34.02); coast trade, $24 to $27 (Steamships, $34 to $39). The wages paid those on steam vessels engaged in the interstate trade are: Engineers, $58 to $140; firemen, $44 to $48; trimmers, $20 to $38. Those in the foreign trade: Able seamen, $20 to $34; firemen, $22 to $44, and trimmers, $20 to $34.

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## STEAM FITTERS WINNING

Cincinnati, Dec. 16.—The Steam Fitters' Union, which has been on strike for about a month, has been successful in reaching agreements with over one half the firms involved in the controversy, with a bright outlook for a complete settlement with all the firms shortly.

## NAVY CLERKS PAY SMALL

Washington, Dec. 16.--That civilian employes of the Navy Department do not receive sufficient pay, and that more clerks are needed in the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts are the salient features of the annual report of the Paymaster, G. W. Cowie, who points out that the new system of bookkeeping now in vogue increases the need of a greater number of clerks, and adds that the average pay of the employes now ranks among the lowest, very much below that of other offices of anything like its importance.

## FALLING WALL KILLS SEVEN

Indianapolis, Dec. 16.--Seven workmen were killed and twenty-one injured when a four story concrete building collapsed. The contractor says, that owing to the recent cold weather the concrete had not set properly. The building collapsed at the noon lunch hour when the majority of the workmen had gone home. Most of those caught in the debris were seated about the structure when it collapsed.

## CONTEMPT BILL HEARING

Washington, Dec. 16.--Hearings have been begun before the House Committee on Judiciary on the bill introduced by Representative Clayton of Alabama, Chairman of the Committee, to define and punish contempts of court. The Clayton measure contemplates the division of contempts of court into two classes, direct and indirect, and specifies that contempts committed during the sitting of the court or of the Judge in Chambers, or a refusal to obey the mandate of a lawful subpoena, or to refuse to submit books and documents, and the misbehavior of officials of court are classed as direct contempts; all other offenses against the court are classed as indirect contempts, the accused in such cases being allowed a jury trial. The hearings are to be continued.

## JUDGMENT FOR MINER STANDS

Indianapolis, Dec. 16.--The suit of John P. Dougherty, coal miner, against a coal mining company has been confirmed by the Appellate Court of Indiana in the sum of $1,250.00 for damages, caused by rock falling from the roof of the coal mine. The mining company contended that the evidence showed the miner was assuming the danger of the loose rock because he had called the attention of the mine boss to it and had begun to work under the rock after the boss had placed some props under the loose rock and that the defect was such that the miner could have made examination and determined the safety for himself. The Appellate Court holds, the mine boss, having undertaken to make the place safe, the miner was not bound to examine the boss' work to see if it was well done, nor was there any assumption of risk.

A threatened strike on the K. & M. Railway at Indianapolis, Ind. had the effect of securing agreement for all crafts in the mechanical department on the system.

## FOREIGN NOTES

The men and women employed by the Birmingham, (England) Small Arms Co. have accepted a compromise settlement and about four thousand of the employes have returned to work.

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The oil millers at Hull, England, are still on strike and the Company is endeavoring by all manner of means to break the ranks of the strikers, but with small effect.

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A new arrangement has been arrived at by the Woolcombers and Gas Workers at Bradford, Eng. by which the two unions will recognize each others members so that gas workers may obtain employment as Woolcombers in the summer time, and the wool combers may work as gas workers in the winter.

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A novel strike has taken place in Switzerland, where five of the Generals in the Swiss Army have struck because they do not regard their annual remuneration of $700 sufficient wages.

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A general strike of workers engaged in the bakery trade is on at Lisbon, Portugal.

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## A NEW PROGRAM

London, Dec. 16.—Reynolds Newspaper says that despite statements to the contrary, there is excellent authority for saying that the Railwaymen's leaders have now drafted a new all grades program which is to be laid before the companies in the event of it being necessary to declare another national strike. The new program has not yet been submitted to the men for approval and will not be submitted until the leaders have given up all hope of inducing the companies to meet the men's representatives in order to discuss the findings of the inquiry commission.

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## GOLD AND SILVER TRADES

London, Dec. 16.—Consolidation in the labor world is making rapid progress and especially so in the industries represented by the Amalgamated Society of Gold, Silver and kindred trades. Hitherto this group of trades has been represented by some 14 small sectional unions in the three centers of the industry, namely, London, Sheffield and Birmingham. A movement started some years ago has resulted in bringing together under one head most of the sectional unions and the formation of a national non-sectional union.

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## THE MINERS FEDERATION

London, Dec. 16.—The request of the Miners Federation of Great Britain for an early conference with the coal operators on the subject of the minimum wage demand has now been formally presented to the latter and a reply is expected shortly. It is stated that there is good ground for predicting that the reply will be of a favorable character and that the expected meeting will take place some time during the month of December.

## COMMISSION READY TO REPORT

Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 16.--The provincial technical education commission held its final session in the school board offices recently, when it finally passed and approved its report, which will be immediately forwarded to the provincial government. The commission was appointed about two years ago. It has held frequent meetings, taking evidence, following which sub-committees were detailed to visit technical institutions and also to gather information respecting the workers in the shops and factories of Winnipeg. The reports of these committees, together with other information, has now been compiled to be presented to the legislature, which meets in February next.

## THE G. T. P. STRIKE

Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 16.--The strike of the G. T. P. machinists and boilermakers is proceeding with determination. Many of the strikers have secured work elsewhere, but there are still over 100 on the strike pay roll of the machinists. The strike committee is in receipt of reports from all along the line to the effect that everything is satisfactory from the men's point of view.

## ADDS UNION LABEL

Washington, Dec. 16.,--It is reported that the Foresters' Courier, a monthly magazine published in Pittsburg and devoted to the fraternal order mentioned, appeared this month with the typographical union label. The publication was inaugurated last May and up to this month has not borne the union label.

## 800 MEN QUIT

Washington, Dec. 16.--Eight hundred men employed in the polishing and plating department of the Victor Talking Machine Company have ceased work because of the introduction of non-union men in that department. The trouble, it is asserted, is caused by a foreman, and if an adjustment is not soon reached 2,000 men will be out.

## COMPENSATION BILL DRAFTED

Washington, Dec. 16.--The commission which was created under joint resolution of Congress to make a thorough investigation into the subject of employers' liability and workmen's compensation, and which has been at work upon the matter, holding hearings, etc., have arrived at the point where a tentative bill has been drafted to introduce in the House and Senate to carry out the plan and enact into a statute. A hearing was held on Dec. 14 in order that opportunity might be had to discuss the provisions of the tentative draft.

## FIREMAN KILLED

New York, Dec. 16.--An extra freight train on the New York Central and a passenger train recently collided in the yards at North White Plains. The fireman of the freight was killed and the engineer seriously injured.

## ULTIMATE END OF "SYNDICALISM"

### Chairman of British Labor Party Severely Criticises Policy Advocated By Syndicalists.

Washington, Dec. 16.--In the October number of the Socialist Review, J. Ramsay McDonald, chairman of the English Labor Party, says: "Let us suppose that the strike is succeeding. The authorities will try to break it, and that will lead to the employment of force. Troops will be mobilized. So the syndicalist cannot avoid his revolution even if he tried. The old revolutionist knew his business, faced the facts, laid his plans; the new revoluntionist does none of these necessary things. Let us assume that the transport services are held up, that the markets and shops are closed, that the workshops are deserted. What follows? The syndicalists make the fatal mistake of calculating that time will be on their side. Exactly the opposite. Time will work against them. However complete the general strike is to be, it is only to affect, even to begin with, a majority. There will be a minority holding the same opinions as were expressed by the suburban dwellers during the recent railway troubles. They will represent the resistance which society must always offer to sudden change. Then there will be a great number of men who will become unemployed without in any way sympathizing with the strike or its purposes. The striker, every day that passes, becomes, in the eyes of an increasing number of people, not the savior but the enemy of society. His assumption is that as the days go society will become more helpless in his hands; the fact is that after the first two or three days, society will begin to organize itself against him, because society as well as the individual is moved by the will to live. The fact is, that the assumption of a progressive paralysis is false. Society will at once take steps to recover command of itself. It will not yield to the general strike; it will resist it. On the day of his first triumph, when he declares his strike, the syndicalist signs his own death warrant and puts the noose about his own neck. The new revolution which syndicalism and its advocates of the Industrial Workers of the World contemplate has avoided none of the errors and pitfalls of the old, but it has added to them a whole series of its own. It is a mere escapade of the nursery mind. It is the product of the creative intelligence of the man who is impatient because it takes the earth 24 hours to wheel round. Wherever syndicalism has raised its Caliban head, it has declared war on political industrialism. The hospitality which the Socialist movement has offered so generously to all kinds of cranks and scoundrels because they professed to be in revolt against the existing order has already done our movement much harm. Let it not add syndicalism to the already too numerous vipers which, in the kindness of its heart, it is warming on its hearthstone."

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In order to avert a strike the building laborers of Manchester, Kent County, England, numbering 2,000 have decided to ask the employers to submit their demands for better pay either to the conciliation Board of the Building Trades, or to arbitration.

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Federated Shop employes at Van Buren, Ark., after a short strike, reached an amicable settlement and returned to work.

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The plumbers of San Diego, Calif. have just secured an increase from $4.50 to $5.00, without strike.